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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1986

p A-14

Aide to Helms Is Focus of Inquiry On a Disclosure of Data to Chile

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5 (AP) — The Justice Department investigation of a reported unauthorized disclosure of secret information to the Chilean Government is focusing on an aide to Senator Jesse Helms, Reagan Administration officials said today.

The State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency say they have evidence that Christopher Manion, brother of a newly confirmed Federal appeals judge, Daniel Manion, disclosed information received in a classified briefing, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The reported disclosure involved the United States' ability to monitor internal communications of the Chilean armed forces, through which officials had apparently learned details of the July 6 burning death of a Chilean-born United States resident at an anti-Government demonstration.

Mr. Manion was hired as a staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Mr. Helms's recommendation and works for the Senator on the panel's Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. Mr. Helms is chairman of the subcommittee.

[ABC news reported that Mr. Manion denied being the source of the information.]

Bob Dole, the Kansas Republican who is the Senate majority leader, said today that Senator Helms had assured him "he had no information, no knowledge" about the matter.

Mr. Helms, a Republican from North Carolina, has been angered by allegations that he and his staff passed along information to the Chilean Government. He said Monday that the accusations were made by Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. "They don't like the fact that I am opposed to their little

agenda down there, which is to sell out the friends of the United States and cozy up to the adversaries of the United States," Mr. Helms said.

A State Department spokesman, Charles Redman, denied Mr. Helms's charge, saying, "Elliott committed no falsehood."

Two other officials, who asked not to be identified, said the committee learned of the purported violation not from Mr. Abrams but from the C.I.A.

A senior State Department official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, described the disclosure as serious, but refused to comment on the nature of the information.

Helms calls leak charges against aide 'ridiculous'

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Sen. Jesse Helms yesterday said charges that one of his aides leaked classified intelligence information to the government of Chile, were "ridiculous."

Mr. Helms said he met with Christopher Manion, an aide on the Foreign Relations Committee, to discuss allegations that Mr. Manion was the subject of an FBI leak investigation.

"All I wanted to know, and I told him to look me in the eye, I said, 'Did you in any way pass along anything, to anybody in Chile, or anyone connected with Chile?'" Mr. Helms said.

"He said, 'No sir.'"

"Chris has never shaded the truth with me once," said Mr. Helms, North Carolina Republican. "He

says it's ridiculous, which it is."

Mr. Manion could not be reached for comment.

Administration sources said the investigation involves the disclosure of a U.S. intelligence-gathering operation in Chile.

One official called the compromise a "serious" disclosure of intelligence methods that revealed U.S. electronic eavesdropping on Chile's military forces.

"I gave Chris only one instruction [Monday] night and I didn't need to do that," Mr. Helms told reporters. "And that was, tell the truth and don't shade it."

The North Carolina Republican repeated allegations that the leak stories were part of a CIA and State Department smear campaign.

"They figured they might get to

me through Chris Manion," Mr. Helms said. "The whole establishment, they wake up salivating, 'How can we get at ol' Helms today?'"

He said the CIA and State Department are "mad about my challenging them on their agenda."

As chairman of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Western Hemisphere affairs, Mr. Helms has been an outspoken critic of State Department policies and has blocked or slowed a number of ambassadorial nominations.

Mr. Helms earlier accused Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams, one of the few senior State Department officials regarded as a political hardliner, of providing false information about the Chilean leak to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

The committee asked the Justice Department to investigate the allegations.

Mr. Abrams has denied he was the source of the allegations against Mr. Helms and his committee.

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Helms says aide told truth

Manion looked him in the eye, denied leaking secrets

By Adell Crowe
USA TODAY

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., said Tuesday his aide Christopher Manion looked him in the eye and denied passing secrets to Chile.

That was proof enough: "Chris has never shaded the truth with me once."

But the Justice Department wants to know if Manion leaked how the U.S. monitors Chilean army communications.

It was through such monitoring that officials here learned of the July 6 fatal

burning of Rodrigo Rojas — a Chilean-born, Washington D.C., resident — during an anti-government protest.

Helms Tuesday called the investigation no more than a State Department attempt to get back at him.

Helms has angered the administration by befriending a succession of right wing foreign leaders, including Chilean President Augusto Pinochet, and using his influential Foreign Relations Committee post to hold up nominations.

"They figured they might get to me through Chris Manion," he said. "The whole es-

tablishment, they wake up salivating. 'How can we get at ol' Helms today?'"

Manion was unavailable for comment. But his brother Daniel Manion — who narrowly won Senate approval last month for a federal appeals court seat — said, "When all the smoke clears, it will be known that my brother didn't do anything."

Christopher Manion was not along when Helms visited Pinochet in July; an aide has said details of the meeting never were discussed with Manion.

The Justice Department



MANION: Not with Helms on July trip to Chile

refused comment, but news reports Monday, citing administration sources, said Manion was at a confidential Senate briefing at which the information was discussed.

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